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A Catholic, a Patriot, a Good Modernist: Manuel de Falla and the Francoist Musical Press

On 14th November 1946, the composer Manuel de Falla died in Alta Gracia, in the Argentinean province of Córdoba. He had last seen his Spanish homeland in September 1939, only five months after the end of the Spanish Civil War. Ever since his departure, music critics and journalists back in Spain had been engaging in a strategy which aimed to present Falla as sympathetic to the Francoist cause and – most importantly – as an incarnation of those values which the regime considered the very core of national identity. It is the aim of this article to analyse this strategy, which was not only a reflection of the ways in which Francoism shaped Spanishness, but also a continuation of conceptions of national identity which predate Franco. The treatment of Falla across a range of periodical publications (from the music criticism sections of newspapers to specialised music periodicals), from his departure to Argentina in September 1939 to his funeral in Cádiz on 9th January 1947, will be analysed, focusing on three main themes which made it possible for the Francoist press to appropriate the composer: the mysticism allegedly inherent to Falla's work and persona; the *Castellanismo* latent in his *El Retablo de Maese Pedro*; and the ways in which Falla's music could incarnate a truly Spanish and 'acceptable' modernism, valid as a model for Spanish young composers.

Falla and the Francoist government

The strategy of music critics and journalists acted as a complement to the moves of the Franco regime to enlist Falla's support as a way of legitimising its cause; such advances will be briefly described in the present section by referring to the existing bibliography on the subject which, however, has devoted less attention to the appropriation of Falla in the musical

press. The interest of the Franco regime in Falla was evident in the developments which followed the composer's death, as a bitter struggle developed between the Francoist government and the Spanish exile community in Argentina, with both parties reclaiming Falla's body and, ultimately, his memory. Finally, the Spanish Embassy, with the mediation of Juan Domingo Perón's government, managed to embark the embalmed corpse on a ship for Spain one month after his demise in a quick and silent operation to avoid the protests of the Spanish exile community or of the Argentinean population.¹

There was a back-story to these events – a story which had started almost fifteen years earlier. Falla's appeal to the Spanish right was evident from the years of the Second Republic when his objections to the anticlericalism of the Republican government turned him into a sort of hero for the most conservative sectors; in 1932, the Catholic periodical *La Hormiga de Oro* portrayed him on its first page under the title 'Una gloria de la España católica' (Hess 2005: 191). On the other hand, Falla, who initially had welcomed the advent of the new Republican regime, soon became disappointed with the anticlerical attitudes which seemed to flourish under the new government and wrote to both the Minister for Education, Fernando de los Ríos (Hess 2005: 186-8) and the President of the Republic, Manuel Azaña (Armero and De Persia 1999) to ask for their mediation and help. In June 1932, the municipal council of Seville announced its intention of paying homage to Falla in a special event. On 8th June, the newspaper *La Unión* published a letter from the composer in which he rejected the homage; he stated that he did not wish to accept any honours whatsoever 'if God is now officially denied all recognition' (Hess 2005: 190).

During the Civil War, the Francoist side soon identified Falla as a major name to gain for its cause, making different moves to attract him to its side in order to legitimise its image

¹ For a detailed account of the events between Falla's death on 14th November 1946 and his funeral in Cádiz on 9th January 1947, see Rein (1996).

both in Spain and abroad; after all, unlike most other Spanish composers, Falla had entertained international prestige since the mid-1910s. Although he had initially regarded Franco's military uprising in a positive light as a means to restore the respect for religion and Catholicism in Spain, his attitude soon changed after the death of his friend, the poet Federico García Lorca, at the hands of falangists in August 1936 (Hess 2005: 216). He chose to stay at his home in Granada 'in work and prayer' (Harper 1998: 41), hardly abandoning his reclusion. In 1937, the general Luis Orgaz asked him to compose a hymn for the nationalist forces; Falla accepted reluctantly, and in the end he merely rearranged a tune composed by Felipe Pedrell, to which he adapted a text written by José María Pemán specifically for the occasion (Hess 2001: 287). Shortly thereafter, Pemán read for Falla some fragments of his epic poem 'Poema de la bestia y el ángel' at the home of the composer in Granada. The poetry reading, far from being a private event, had clear clear propagandistic resonances; it was indeed attended by several of the city's national and religious authorities, and was extensively featured in the Andalusian Francoist press with *ABC Sevilla* calling Falla a 'poet and musician of the Crusade' (*ABC Sevilla* 1937: 1). In December 1937 he was also offered the position of head of the yet-to-be-created Instituto de España; Falla's initial refusal was not easily accepted by the Junta Técnica del Estado and correspondence was exchanged until the Junta finally exempted Falla due to his poor health condition (Hess 2005: 236). In the meanwhile, the Nationalist side included Falla systematically in its cultural and musical programme, and between 1938 and 1939 the poet and music critic Gerardo Diego offered talks on Falla – sometimes with the collaboration of the pianist José Cubiles – in several Spanish cities under the control of the Francoist army (Sopeña 1988).

When the Civil War came to an end on 1st April 1939, Falla accepted an invitation to conduct four concerts of Spanish music at the Teatro Colón of Buenos Aires. Soon after his departure, the Franco regime started its attempts to guarantee Falla's return to Spain, or at

least his sympathy to the Francoist cause. On his way to Argentina, he received a telegram from the government granting him a substantial annual honorary assignment of 25,000 pesetas. New honours followed promptly: he was named a member of the recently created Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (24/11/39), honorary head of the Patronato Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (14/3/40); he was also awarded the Gran Cruz de Alfonso X El Sabio (13/7/40) and made a member of the Consejo de la Hispanidad (7/1/41) (Harper 1998: xlv). However, the moves of the Spanish government were rather unsuccessful; Falla rejected most of these honours and never returned to Spain or lent any substantial support to the Franco regime.

The ‘Concierto-Homenaje’ of 1941: Shaping Falla

On 14th October 1941, the Comisaría de Música² organised a ‘concierto-homenaje a Manuel de Falla’ at the Teatro Nacional, with the participation of the recently founded Orquesta Nacional de España conducted by Ernesto Halffter – a student of Falla himself. The programme included a semi-staged performance (including puppets) of *El Retablo de Maese Pedro*, with Lola Rodríguez Aragón, Enrique Domínguez and Lorenzo Sánchez; *Noches en los Jardines de España*, with José Cubiles³ as a soloist; and dances from *El Amor Brujo* and *El Sombrero de Tres Picos*. Of these, the *Retablo* was the work which attracted the most attention from Spanish music critics, having been much less frequently performed in Spain during the previous years than the other three works. The reception of the *Retablo* and of the

² The Comisaría de Música was founded by the regime in 1939. During its first months, it was jointly managed by composer Joaquín Turina, pianist José Cubiles and musicologist Nemesio Otaño, but formally Turina was its first commissar until his death in 1949. During its first years of existence, the main aim of the Comisaría was to create and manage the Agrupación Musical de Música de Cámara (National Chamber Ensemble) and particularly the Orquesta Nacional (National Orchestra), which gave its first concerts in 1940.

³ Cubiles was regarded as one of the most significant performers of Falla’s music, and particularly of *Noches en los Jardines de España*, under the Franco regime. During the Civil War he had toured the Nationalist zone playing the concerto, occasionally in partnership with Gerardo Diego’s talks on Falla, as reported by Diego himself in his correspondence with Falla (Sopeña 1988).

concert as a whole prefigures the most important themes which characterised the appropriation of Falla by the musical press during the 1940s, allowing the critics to highlight Falla's mysticism and Castilianism, and his ability to become a model of healthy, acceptable modernism.

The 'concierto-homenaje' seems to have been perceived as one of the most significant milestones of post-Civil War musical life in the capital, which at the time was still attempting to make its recovery after three years of conflict which had resulted in the exile of many prominent musicians. For example, Conrado del Campo included the event in his list of highlights of the musical life of Madrid during 1941 (1941: 7), and Sopena evoked it as a milestone of the post-Civil War musical panorama seven years after the performance (1948: 405). The fact that this was the first performance of the *Retablo* after the end of the war, and one of the first concerts organised by the Comisaría de Música with the Orquesta Nacional, probably helped fuel interest in the event and consolidate the notion that the Comisaría was on its way to re-establishing the Madrilenian musical panorama.⁴ Some critics, however, were cautious in their enthusiasm: Joaquín Rodrigo, for example, thanked the Comisaría, especially its president Joaquín Turina and its secretary Federico Sopena, but admitted that: '¿Quiere esto decir que la vida musical española se ha articulado? Sería engañarnos a nosotros mismos si contestásemos afirmativamente; pero sí que se está en camino de hacerlo, que se ven las posibilidades y la manera de realizarlo'⁵ (1941a: 3).

⁴ The creation of the Orquesta Nacional was, together with the Agrupación Nacional de Música de Cámara (or Quinteto Nacional), one of the foundational projects of the Comisaría de Música; the idea, however, had already been advanced in the early 1930s by Adolfo Salazar, and during the war the Republican Government had created an 'Orquesta de Conciertos' in 1937.

⁵ Throughout his music criticism writings, Rodrigo's cautiousness towards the regime's policies often contrasts with the sheer enthusiasm usually displayed by other critics such as Regino Sáinz de la Maza or Conrado del Campo. In the first months of his tenure as a music critic for *Pueblo*, he was even mildly reprimanded by the Director General de la Prensa due to his overzealous attitude and advised to adopt a benevolent take on the Government's musical policies (see Gutiérrez 2005: 407-8).

The reviews of the concert show how the *Retablo* was accommodated to the Castilianist agenda of the regime; the *Retablo* was purely Spanish because it was truly Castilian, combining Castilian folk melodies with elements of the Spanish art music heritage such as Gaspar Sanz or Salinas: ‘Es un triple concentrado de las más auténticas esencias nuestras’ (Rodrigo 1941a: 3). This included, as Rodrigo remarked in a second review for the periodical *Escorial* (1941b: 121), an ‘inclinación ascética’ which further linked the *Retablo* to the Castilian values, and which preludes several critical writings of the 1940s which deepen the connection between Falla and mysticism/asceticism as expression of a purely Spanish religiousness, as will be discussed later.

Rodrigo agreed with another significant commentator of the concert, Federico Sopena, that it was Falla’s abandonment of *Andalucismo* and his turn to Castilianism which had made his work truly Spanish and universal at the same time. Rodrigo even seemed bothered by the inclusion of a third *Andalucista* work in the concert, calling the inclusion of dances from *El Sombrero de Tres Picos* ‘ésta perfectamente inútil y aún perjudicial, a pesar de la buena interpretación’ (1941a: 3).⁶ According to Sopena, it was the *Retablo*’s Castilianism which had allowed Falla to present a more humanised, truly Spanish form of modernism, in contraposition to the dominance of the ‘cold’, dehumanised modernism represented by Stravinsky:

‘En los años de *El Retablo de Maese Pedro* se entonaba el canto funeral de la música como proyección sentimental. La gracia parecía haber huido del mundo, y nadie

⁶ Rodrigo did not elaborate on the reasons of his dislike of the *Sombrero*; however, a connection may be established between Rodrigo’s comment and the negative reception of the *Sombrero* by the Spanish right-wing press after its first performance in Spain in 1921, as analysed by Hess (1995). Indeed, the themes of the unreliability and corruption of the ruling classes and the implicit possibility of adultery did not fit within the ideological requirements of the Spanish right-wing sectors; neither, later on, within those of the Franco regime. As Hess has pointed out, during the Franco regime the *Sombrero* was very seldom performed in its full, choreographic version; its presence in concert programmes was almost always limited to orchestral or pianistic versions of some of its best-known numbers, thus preventing the audience from getting a full picture of the story of adultery and resistance to authority which is developed in the plot.

podría pensar en la ciencia inspirada, en entregarse extático, a un algo venido de no sé dónde (...). Un músico genial, Strawinsky, parecía representar la única actitud posible: objetividad, orden, formalismo riguroso, afán plástico, huida de lo tierno, grandiosa visión de la música como arquitectura' (1941: 3).

This allowed Sopena – both as a critic and as the secretary of the Comisaría de Música – to vindicate Falla's music as an acceptable form of modernism in a context in which musical modernism was sometimes regarded with suspicion. For example, shortly after the end of the Civil War, Joaquín Turina deplored that, during the early 1930s, Spanish musical composition had fallen prey to 'la deshumanización del arte, piedra angular del vanguardismo', and he congratulated himself that 'la victoria lograda por nuestros soldados ha hecho barrer, al menos en la música, todo este tinglado; pero no es menos cierto que, al desaparecer, ha dejado un hueco, un vacío que urge rellenar lo más pronto posible' (1939: 13).

Although Turina did not mention any names, he was most probably referring to the composers of the *Grupo de los Ocho*,⁷ which had been regarded as the utmost representatives of the blending of Spanish music with the European avant-garde trends during the 1920s and 1930s. Most of these composers, on the other hand, had gone into exile after the Civil War, alongside other composers who did not belong to the *Grupo* but were of a similar age and also tried to integrate new trends into Spanish music, such as Roberto Gerhard. Rodrigo's and Sopena's reviews of the concert suggest that Falla was seen at this stage as a catalyst for the

⁷ The *Grupo de los Ocho* included 8 young composers active in Madrid during the 1920s and 1930s (Rodolfo Halffter, Julián Bautista, Salvador Bacarisse, Gustavo Pittaluga, Ernesto Halffter, Fernando Remacha, Juan José Mantecón and Rosa García Ascot), although the denomination, an imitation of the French *Les Six*, is not unproblematic. Of them, R. Halffter, Bautista, Bacarisse, Pittaluga and García Ascot left Spain after the Civil War; E. Halffter settled in Portugal during the war, but after the conflict he lived between Lisbon and Madrid, frequently participating in the Spanish musical life. Fernando Remacha stayed in Spain but abandoned the musical scene until the late 1950s.

post-Civil War musical life, which was still suffering from the displacement of a sizeable part of the younger generation of composers; Falla's allegedly mystic religiousness and his turn to Castilianism appealed to the conception of Spanishness promoted by the regime, and this made him and his music the emblems of a national and healthy modernism.

Falla as a mystic

The instrumentalisation of Catholicism during the Franco regime as a nation-building force adopted various forms; one of them is particularly prevalent in the reception of Falla by the musical press – mysticism. Asceticism and mysticism, rather than being simply considered trends of Spanish sixteenth- and seventeenth-century religious literature, were exalted by Francoism as manifestations of Spanishness, even in the most literal sense, with Saint Theresa of Jesus being hailed as 'la santa de la Raza'. Musicologically, the thesis of the 'Spanish musical mysticism', which characterised Spanish polyphony of the same era (Tomás Luis de Victoria, Cristóbal Morales) by way of its supposedly intrinsic mysticism, had been first formulated by the French Hispanist Henry Collet in his 1913 thesis *Le mysticisme musical espagnol*, and it was soon embraced by Spanish music historians.⁸ The thesis was particularly successful during the Franco regime in the realm of religious music; in his précis of the history of Spanish music published as an article in *Arbor*, Higinio Anglés, then director of the Instituto Español de Musicología, wrote that 'Nuestros compositores supieron crear un género de música mística que, al alcanzar su apogeo en el siglo XVI, durante el reinado de Felipe II, no fué igualado por ninguna otra esquina de Europa' (1948: 25). Mysticism was also well represented in the various critical and journalistic writings published in 1940 on the

⁸ On the subject of the mysticism of Victoria, and more generally the mysticism of Spanish polyphony, Ramos (2003) writes that 'to summarise, there is no evidence of a particular interest of Spanish mystics in music, nor of Spanish musicians in mysticism.'

occasion of Tomás Luis de Victoria's fourth centenary⁹, such as Barberá's article on Victoria's alleged 'Romanness', which he rejected arguing that Victoria's polyphony was pervaded by mysticism and this made him authentically Spanish (Barberá 1940: 78).

In the absence of a significant religious work in his production, Falla's ascetic and mystic credentials were sometimes mediated through his physique, and comparing his appearance to that of an ascetic, a monk or even a hermit became nothing short of commonplace in musical criticism of the time. Cándido G. Ortiz de Villanos likened him to a *cartujo*, a particular religious order which aims towards the contemplation of God through isolation and extreme austerity (1943: 13). A more extensive comparison was established with Saint John of the Cross on the basis that Falla, when composing the *Atlántida*, had been seeing the same Granada landscapes than Saint John 'cuando se encendía su alma en los misticismos líricos.' This connection, in the opinion of Ortiz de Villanos, provided a special symbolism to the *Atlántida*: after having started to compose it in Granada, Falla then took it to the Americas, thus reinforcing the connection between mysticism and the spiritual foundation of the Spanish Empire: 'La *Atlántida*, comenzada frente a la majestad de Sierra Nevada y de la vega inmensa, y que ahora termina al otro lado de los mares, desde donde puede contemplar a España entera, íntegra, en la perspectiva lejana, su pujanza histórica y su grandeza espiritual'. Thus, Falla's alleged mysticism was not only a matter of religious belief; it was also a symbol of his Spanishness and also the impulse which had led him to re-establish the ancient spiritual connection of the Spanish Empire with the Americas.

Such commonplaces about Falla's mysticism were developed by other writers as well: Gerardo Diego compared him to a *jerónimo*, another religious order which places particular emphasis on frugality and penance, and stated that he would have been happy to join a

⁹ At the time, it was still believed that Victoria had been born in 1540. The date of 1548, which is most commonly accepted today, was not established until 1960 by Ferreol Hernández.

monastic community had he not been so humble that even this would have been an excessive honour for him (1946: 3). Falla's departure to America was also explained in terms of (spiritual) reconquest: 'Y en vez de tomar rumbo al oriente mediterráneo, se nos fue a reconquistar Indias de amor y de fe.' Falla's depiction as a spiritual conqueror is consonant with the early regime's aspiration to regenerate cultural and diplomatic relations with Latin American countries under the guise of an 'imperialismo esencialmente pacífico e intelectual' (Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla 1992: 47); moreover, it could help dissipate suspicions that Falla's departure might have been motivated by his discontentment with certain aspects of the regime.

Another aspect of Falla's religiosity which was repeatedly highlighted by Francoist critics was his attitude towards the Second Republic, grounded on his disgust for some of the government's anticlerical policies. Critics usually seized the opportunity to apply rhetorical formulae commonly used during early Francoism to describe the period 1931-1936 as an anti-Catholic era rooted in communism and, as such, a negation of the very essence of Spain: 'corro de bestialidad alrededor de la Verdad muerta' (Borrás 1946: 3), 'horribles guerras anticristianas' (López-Chávarri 1946: 4), 'España invadida por el odio comunista' (Vargas 1951: 3). Falla's initial collaboration with the Republican government as a voting member of the Junta Nacional de Música in 1931 was thoroughly ignored, and only his disgust with the most anticlerical policies of the government was recorded in order to highlight his deeply Christian nature and to suggest a connection between him and the purifying aims of the Franco regime.

Traces of Falla's alleged mysticism were also identified in his work, particularly in the Harpsichord Concerto. However, the interpretation is not original to Francoist critics; the concerto's mysticism had already been highlighted by the critic Juan María Thomas back in 1926 after the first performance of the Concerto in Barcelona, and immediately echoed by

Spanish and then by French critics, as analysed by Hess (2001: 232). Again, mysticism was strongly linked to Spanishness; Federico Sopena (1944: 4) stated that the concerto was inspired by Falla's 'vibración mística', and that this gave it an unequivocally Spanish character; Sopena recalled that the work was played at a Hispanic-German music festival in Bad Elster in 1941, and one of the German critics who attended the event was frustrated when he failed to recognise any Spanish tune or rhythm in it, yet he was able to recognise the Spanishness of the work precisely because of its mysticism. The falangist guitarist and music critic Regino Sáinz de la Maza was perhaps more vocal than Sopena in closely linking Falla's mysticism to his intrinsic Spanishness and his connection to the mystic composers of the Spanish Empire: 'La obra artística del insigne gaditano', wrote Sáinz de la Maza, 'penetrada de las mejores esencias hispánicas, está hecha toda al hilo de su propia vida ascética, aquella vida suya tan parecida a la del más exigente místico' (1946: 9). Sáinz de la Maza also stated that Falla's inscription at the end of the second tempo of the Concerto ('A. Dom. MCMXXVI In Festa Corporis Christi') was proof of his 'profundísimo sentido cristiano' (1946: 10). The guitarist's article, written as an obituary to Falla, combined several of the commonplaces discussed in this section, such as the comparison to Saint John of the Cross or Falla's role as a spiritual ambassador, showing the way in which the Francoist musical press selected some of Falla's traits in order to accommodate him to the requirements of the regime.

Falla's funeral was also seized by the regime and the press to exploit the composer's mystic associations, in the context of theatricality which characterised the large-scale displays of patriotism and religiousness typical of the Franco regime (Di Febo 2002). Falla's funeral was attended by a number of officials of the regime, including the Minister of Justice, Raimundo Fernández Cuesta (who covered the absence of General Franco), and several representatives of the musical and cultural life of the country, with the presence of the Army and the Navy as well (Muñoz Llorete 1947: 5; Bayona 1947: 1). The musical setting for the

funeral mass, celebrated at the Cathedral of Cádiz, was Victoria's Requiem Mass, performed by the Capella Classica choir of Palma de Mallorca under the direction of Juan María Thomas. Commentators seized the occasion to highlight the connection between Victoria and Falla, portraying them as representatives, in different times, of the same religious, truly Spanish impulse: '¡Qué lejos en el tiempo!' wrote Antonio Fernández-Cid in his chronicle, '¡Qué próximos en el ideal estético!' (1947: 1). Luis Calvo described Victoria as 'predecesor de Falla en piedad religiosa y recogimiento artístico, coterráneo y contemporáneo de Santa Teresa y una de las figuras más veneradas por Falla en el arte español' (1947: 7); the reference to Saint Theresa in association with Victoria certified both Victoria's mysticism and also Falla's.

Falla's Castilianism

Although Falla was an Andalusian who had used the folk music of his region as inspiration for most of his early successful works, Francoist music critics show a tendency to play up his associations with Castile rather than with his native region, in consonance with the Castilianist hegemony typical of the time. The significance of Castile as the region which had provided the historical and identitarian foundation of Spain was not new to the Franco regime; from the late nineteenth century onwards, the Generación del 98, in its search for the core identity of Spain as a means of moral regeneration, had focused on Castile. This process is perhaps best exemplified in Miguel de Unamuno's statement from 1895 that 'Whereas Castile formed the Spanish nation, the nation has increasingly hispanicized Castile.' Don Quixote, the Castilian hero *par excellence* had a preeminent role in the imagery of the Generación del 98, to the point that Britt Arredondo has described its very enterprise as 'quixotism': a 'sense of chivalric enthusiasm and idealism' (2005: 12) to face the less-than-

promising reality of the loss of the last Spanish colonies in 1898 and the realisation that Spain not only was not among the most powerful European nations, but was severely lagging behind in many respects; and a desire to renovate Spain through moral and spiritual values, and less so through economic and political reform, as Regenerationism had advocated in the late nineteenth century.

In this context, the figure of Don Quixote was not perceived – as it had been during the seventeenth and eighteenth century – as a satirical anti-hero who attempted absurd enterprises, but rather as a very serious ‘regenerating hero’ (2005: 13). Such an interpretation has also been advanced by Hess (2001: 207) for Falla’s *Retablo*, in that some elements are removed from the original plot to portray a Don Quixote with whom the listener sympathised after having seen him being fooled by the marionette theatre; Falla would thus participate in the ‘quixotist’ climate of the early twentieth century, and, similarly, his move from an Andalusian to a Castilian theme would have fitted both the simplicity privileged by neo-Classicism (which Francoist critics avoided to mention in their reviews of the *Concerto*) and the Castilianist agenda of a number of Spanish intellectuals of his time – and, years later, of the Franco regime. Indeed, although the concert programmes of the Madrid orchestras during the 1940s (Orquesta Nacional, Orquesta Sinfónica, Orquesta Filarmónica, Orquesta Clásica) suggest that performances of the *Andalucista* works outnumbered the performances of the works typically associated with the Castilianist agenda (the *Retablo* and the *Concerto*), it was the latter which attracted the most critical attention.

Some critical writings such as Sopena’s (1943: 4) advance the idea that Falla’s ‘Castilianist’ period was superior to the ‘Andalucist’ one, and even frame it in providentialist terms, suggesting that it was Falla’s destiny, as a Spaniard and a Catholic, to reach his late, mature style in Castilianism. ‘Pero Castilla ya le reclamaba’, wrote Sáinz de la Maza about Falla’s evolution after *El Amor Brujo*, ‘Castilla guardaba su secreto musical en un sueño de

cuatro siglos (...). Desde ese momento, Falla aspira al cielo' (1939: 38). Providentialism – heavily entrenched in the Falange's conception of Spanish history, led by the intangible spirit of *Hispanidad* –¹⁰ is also evident in Sáinz de la Maza's description of the *Retablo* as 'destino que nuestros grandes polifonistas religiosos y cortesanos del siglo XVI imprimieron a la música española' (1941: 14), while the Concerto was 'imagen desnuda y pura de Castilla, su resonancia ancestral, austera y mítica.'

Sáinz de la Maza also indulged in considerations of a racial nature to explain Falla's intrinsic Castilianism and Spanishness and his providential role in Spanish music, linking him to illustrious Castilian personalities in spite of his Andalusian origin: 'Explorador de las rutas musicales de España, el genio de la raza se expresa en él con sus propios atributos, con el carácter que marcan las creaciones de un Victoria, de un San Juan de la Cruz, de un Cervantes' (1941: 14). The category of *raza*, frequently used in Spanish musical criticism from approximately 1915 mostly as a synonym for the Spanish people, flourished after Francoism, incorporating both resonances from the European fascisms and a connection to Catholicism which was, however, absent in Germany and Italy (Pérez Zalduondo, 2007). It is precisely this connection to Catholicism which ensured the centrality of Castile, which had been the kingdom to lead the *Reconquista* against the Muslim, thus expelling all alien, non-Spanish elements and helping consolidate the authentic Spanish *raza*.

Rodrigo also echoed the connections of Falla to Castilianism by inserting him into a broader narrative which went back to the Middle Ages when, after Alfonso X of Castile 'se nubla el ideal de Imperio, se debilita la conciencia del destino histórico y enmudece la música de España' (1943: 9). Rodrigo wrote that Spanish music was recovered with the Catholic

¹⁰ In his influential *Defensa de la Hispanidad*, Ramiro de Maeztu described *Hispanidad* as an objective spirit which expresses itself in all the cultural manifestations of a nation; it is eternal and unchangeable, but it can fail if the circumstances (economic, geographical) of a given period avoid its materialisation (Maeztu 1934). Ernesto Giménez Caballero used the similar notion of *Genio de España* as an eternal spirit, physically attached to the Spanish land, which had guided the destiny of the country, flourishing during the Empire (Giménez Caballero, 1933). Both writers were enormously influential during the early Franco regime.

Monarchs who established musical chapels exclusively composed of Spanish musicians; it then reached its splendour between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries, started its decadence during the Napoleonic period, and finally had its rebirth with Falla. Closely mirroring assumptions held by Spanish musicology of the time,¹¹ Rodrigo was developing a providentialist perspective of Spanish music history, in which the flourishing of music was intrinsically linked to the flourishing of the Empire, first Castilian and then Spanish.

Falla's role as a facilitator of the musical recovery of Spain also fitted well within the theme of *Quijotismo*, showing that he was still considered a powerful inspiration for the recovery of the Spanish musical life after the Civil war, even if he was no longer living in Spain and his direct influence on the musical life of the country was limited. Rodrigo A. de Santiago compared him to Cervantes because Cervantes had opened the door to the Siglo de Oro, and Falla was also meant to be the initiator of a musical 'Siglo de Oro' (1947: 15). Dámaso Torres, on the other hand, likened him to Don Quixote himself: 'Paladín de la eternal verdad musical española, que rompe sus lanzas para vengar agravios y enderezar entuertos, y proclamar y hacer proclamar a los cuatro vientos, que a su dama, a su Dulcinea, no hay quien la supere (...), y esa dama tan preciosa de sus sueños, es la Canción Española' (1946: 3), thus mirroring the *noventayochista* conception of this literary character as a regenerating hero.

Falla as a good modernist

As has been partially illustrated in the discussion of the reviews of the 1941 performance of the *Retablo*, the attitude of early Francoist music critics towards musical modernism was usually characterised by some diffidence, when not open rejection. For

¹¹ Anglés, in his précis of the history of Spanish music, talked about a 'floración musical espléndida' which did not go beyond the eighteenth century (1948: 50). In music criticism, examples of criticism or oblivion towards Spanish music in the nineteenth century abound; see for example Andrade da Silva 1943: 7; Daranos 1942: 3; or Sopeña 1942a: 7.

example, both Stravinsky and Ravel were regarded by Francisco Esbri (1941: 7) as composers of ‘música caricaturesca’ because of the lack of respect they had shown when confronting J.S. Bach, or, in general, whenever they wrote a piece of music. This attitude, which Esbri compared to ‘veneno,’ made young musicians think that they were allowed to ‘play games’ with music, ultimately leading to the crisis which modernism had represented. The veteran critic Eduardo López-Chávarri (1942: 4) even spoke about a ‘matanza de los grandes maestros’ which included not only art music composers reinterpreting the great works of the past, but also jazzmen doing the same.

Antonio de las Heras (1944: 10) went even further in directly associating the lack of respect for ancient music with the decadence of Spanish composition before the Civil War. He described Stravinsky’s neoclassicism influence of Spanish music as ‘deslumbradores fuegos de artificio llegan a la marca hispánica, los elementos raciales que le daban color a la música española parecen pasar a mejor vida. Grave momento para los compositores españolistas.’ Although he did not refer by name to any Spanish composers who succumbed to this influence, he was probably referring to the composers of the *Grupo de los Ocho*, who had imitated Stravinsky in reinterpreting the style of ancient composers such as Scarlatti through the prism of modernism.

Stravinsky, however, tended to gather certain sympathies from music critics, if not because of the music, then because of its political sympathies. He was made an honorary member of the Academia de Bellas Artes after he signed a letter in support of the Movimiento and he also received sympathy for the rejection he had from the Soviet Union (*Ritmo* 1940: 23). Sopeña deplored the abandonment of tonality as a consequence of ‘el izquierdismo político’ (1942b: 65) but he spared Stravinsky from his criticism because the Russian composer represented ‘orden y jerarquía’ (1942b: 66).

Despite his mild sympathies for Stravinsky, Sopena himself was the main upholder of another popular idea in the critical reception of Falla at this time: the contraposition between Stravinsky's foreign, dehumanised, 'cold' modernism and Falla's Spanish and human modernism. This is the perspective he discussed in his visit to Lisbon in 1943 as part of a delegation of the Comisaría de Música, accompanying the first trip abroad of the Orquesta Nacional de España: 'Para Falla, la música es, ante todo, emoción, sentimiento, y cuando no es sentimiento es sólo artificio. Stravinsky, en cambio, niega que la música pueda expresar sentimiento alguno y la declara inepta para todo lo emotivo y pasional' (*Arriba* 1943: 4). Later in the decade, in his two articles on contemporary music for the C.S.I.C.-managed humanities periodical *Arbor*, Sopena presented Falla again – and particularly his *Retablo* – as a champion of human values in a panorama of modernist dehumanisation; modernism, according to Sopena, had struggled since the 1930s to find a channel for musical sincerity, and this channel could only be granted by a resurrection of nationalism, which, in the case of *El Retablo de Maese Pedro*, was intrinsically linked to religion and asceticism (1947: 177). The *Retablo*, unlike other modernist works, was not susceptible of losing the favour of the audiences – especially the Spanish ones – because it had been written 'a la medida del hombre' (1948: 405) and thus avoided the extreme mechanisation and dehumanisation which, in Sopena's opinion, was often characteristic of modern music.

The idea of modernist music and art as characteristically deprived of human dimension and unable to reflect human feeling and emotion was not innovative of Sopena or indeed of Francoist musical criticism: it had been introduced in Spanish intellectual circles by the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset in the 1920s. In his essay 'Musicalia', published in 1921, Ortega y Gasset specifically addressed avant-garde music (whose first representative he considered to be Debussy) and asserted that this phenomenon was characterised by placing an emotional distance between the composer and his audience; this, allegedly, made modern

music incomprehensible and obscure for the masses (although he did not necessarily position himself against modern music). In *La deshumanización del arte* (1925) he introduced the influential concept of the ‘dehumanisation of art’: he maintained that modern art was directed exclusively to an elite and was thus devoid of the importance, transcendence and appeal to the broader public it had enjoyed in the nineteenth century. A decade later, the falangist Ernesto Giménez Caballero too identified Debussy as the main initiator of the dehumanisation of music, accelerated afterwards by the introduction of technology. Dehumanisation, according to Giménez Caballero, was the main problem of both Occidental music – too intellectualised to be understood by the common man – and Soviet music (1935: 26).

The assumption that musical modernism was generally dehumanised and that Falla’s music could provide it with a measure of humanity was not exclusive to Sopeña; rather, it became commonplace among critics – who saw in Stravinsky the utmost representation of international modernism – for different reasons: for Conrado del Campo, Stravinsky was intrinsically ‘triste’, which Falla was not (1946). Rafael Sánchez Mazas (1946) found ‘elementos de destrucción, de revolución y aun de furor y crueldad’ in Stravinsky’s music – elements which, he stated, were nowhere to be found in Falla. Moreover, the influences of Stravinsky or other modernist composers on Falla were rarely mentioned by the critics, thus emphasising Falla’s unique Spanish genealogy in his contribution to the creation of a fully human and Spanish modernism.

Conclusion: Falla after early Francoism

The moves of the early Franco government towards Falla still during the Civil War show that the regime soon identified the composer as an invaluable asset; his intellectual

appeal both in Spain and abroad would mean, to some extent, legitimisation and prestige for the new Francoist institutions. By bringing Falla's devoutness to the foreground, he could be comfortably assimilated to the myth of Spain propagated by Francoism, with Catholicism being the foundation of the national identity. Mysticism and Castilianism became the prism through which all the work of Falla was viewed by the musical press. Moreover, Falla could provide critics with an archetype of the 'good modernist', sometimes contrary to Stravinsky or Schoenberg.

However, it would not be accurate to say that Falla was completely co-opted by the Francoist musical press, rendering his figure, his work or his writings unable to generate new meanings for other groups of people. In this regard, unlike the figures of other personalities appropriated by totalitarian regimes, Falla has been well able to live beyond his Francoist persona. Before the Civil War, Falla was considered a spiritual father by the composers of the so-called *Grupo de los Ocho* because of the artistic dimension he had given to music and musicians in Spain, integrating them fully into the intellectual class, and because he had made possible the internationalisation of Spanish music abroad. These composers still kept their devotion for him even after most of them had to flee Spain due to the Civil War. This feeling was shared by other politically exiled composers such as Roberto Gerhard, who expressed his respect and admiration for Falla in his correspondence with him (Casares Rodicio, 1989: 57), and Jaume Pahissa; but also by musicians of the same generation who chose to stay in Francoist Spain, such as Joaquín Rodrigo. In 1947, a group of young composers in Barcelona chose to name itself *Círculo Manuel de Falla*.¹² The fact that their activities were promoted and supported by the French Institute and that they soon evolved to positions of compromise with Catalan culture points out that, although it would be inexact to consider them revolutionary, they did not uncritically accept the conceptions of music and culture which

¹² Its members were initially Joan Comellas, Josep Cirlot, Manuel Valls, Ángel Cerdá and Albert Blancafort (all of them born between 1913 and 1928).

were imposed by the regime (and which they undoubtedly absorbed at some point), and yet they recognised unequivocally Falla as their model (Gässer, 1999).

Whereas the *Círculo Manuel de Falla* did not have a definite compositional line, with its members following different options, the *Generación del 51*¹³ did consciously follow more innovative techniques of composition, wishing to detach itself from the traditional language represented by Rodrigo and other successful composers of the 1940s; this seemed to truncate their aspirations of getting their work listened to internationally. In this context, Falla's stylistic choices were more difficult to adhere to, yet these composers found in Falla, albeit not in his music, a model. Their internal struggle is shown by the fact that most of them (for example, Carmelo Bernaola, Jesús Villa-Rojo, Antón García Abril) did compose music in homage to Falla, but their homage came relatively late in their lives when the need to signal radically their disagreement with the official aesthetics was not so urgent anymore (Nommick, 1999). In the words of Manuel Valls Gorina (1962: 27), who had directly taken part in this climate of innovations as a young composer and a member of the *Círculo Manuel de Falla*, for the composers of the *Generación del 51*: 'Para los compositores recientemente aparecidos, Manuel de Falla y su estética, pertenecen a un pasado, que aunque próximo, es ya historia, y por tanto prefieren incorporarse a los movimientos espirituales aparecidos a través del armisticio.' Falla's attitude and work was accepted 'como representativa de un ejemplar y paulatino proceso depurador,' but there was also 'una reacción contra el nacionalismo por considerar caduca y agotada su misión' which prevented them from following Falla's compositional aesthetics *au pied de la lettre*.

¹³ The *Generación del 51* usually includes composers such as Cristóbal Halffter (who coined the generation's name), Luis de Pablo or Ramón Barce – the composers who, allegedly, introduced to Spain the *avant-garde* trends. The mention of 1951 in the name of the generation refers to the fact that most of them graduated from the Conservatory of Madrid this year and subsequently started their careers in professional composition, although their real breakthrough did not come until 1958 with the foundation of the group Nueva Música and the extensive promotion of its *avant-garde* music in the musical press.

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